

assure minority voice, whether that minority be women or blacks through the district election process. We also have found in Douglas County that the cost of entry into the political process is significantly less through a district election process than through an at large process. It is for that reason that Senator Chambers and I offer this particular bill to the Legislature today. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Nichol. Oh, excuse me, there is an amendment on the desk. I am sorry, Senator.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Newell would move to amend the bill.

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I offer an amendment. I would like to have the Clerk call the....read the amendment since I did not have a chance to distribute it.

CLERK: Mr. President, the amendment would read as follows: (Read the Newell amendment as found on pages 675-676 of the Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR NEWELL: All right, I want to explain this amendment. Presently, one of the arguments that has been brought forward is that the amendments that you can in fact petition to change the way the election process works, except that because of the rural nature of the State of Nebraska, the petition route has been extremely difficult in your larger counties and that is why the "fifty thousand" provision. So this will in no way change the intent or the purpose of LB 129 but it will say that after the implementation of this act if for one reason or another the people in counties of fifty thousand or more like to change their government, they may do so with a smaller percentage of votes, petition than before. It was fifteen percent before and for counties of fifty thousand or more, your larger counties, it will be reduced to seven percent in case there should be some desire to change. The reason has been and the argument has been that it has prevented access in your larger counties, and I believe that is the case, and consequently has forced the Legislature to make these decisions. Now the situation is the Legislature has always made these decisions and I think that this might help, at least allow the public to have a little more say.

PRESIDENT: Vard Johnson, do you care to speak on the amendment?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes, I would, Mr. President. I rise in